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Pedagogical classroom practice and the social context: The case of Botswana

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Abstract

Attempts have been made in Botswana to change teachers' didactic classroom practices. These attempts, however, have not been successful. More often than not, this lack of success is attributed to technical problems associated with the innovation delivery system. In this paper I argue that this technicist approach to problems of pedagogical change is faulty in that it treats pedagogical innovations as value-neutral. I argue that pedagogical innovations are social constructions influenced by the wider social context. By adopting a socio-historical approach, this paper traces the genesis of authoritarian classroom practices that studies have reported in Botswana classrooms. A number of factors are outlined as having influenced classroom practices in Botswana. These include the imported bureaucratic "authoritarian educational model of nineteenth century Britain, the missionaries/colonialists' belief in the supremacy of Western civilisation, the authoritarianism inherent in Tswana society, and the human resource development policy

of post-independence Botswana. Today these interact with technical issues in complex ways to impede pedagogic change.



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